

REMARKS

Claims 20, 21, 23-25, 27, 28 and 32-40 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 20 is amended for clarification, and claims 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 32-35, 39 and 40 are amended to correct informalities. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, on page 26, lines 12-26 of the specification. No new matter is added.

Reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested, at least in light of the following remarks.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 32 would be allowable if the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is overcome.

II. §112 Rejection

The Office Action rejects claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In particular, the Office Action asserts that claim 32 is indefinite because claim 32 allegedly recites a parameter range without associated units. Claim 32 is amended responsive to the rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

III. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 20, 21, 23-25, 27, 28 and 33-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,749,970 to Fukuta et al. ("Fukuta") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,728,539 to Gane. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Fukuta and Gane, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose and would not have rendered obvious "the elastic body is disposed in such a manner that the elastic body moves so as to make an upper end portion of the elastic body contact the outer periphery of the cam and a lower end portion of the elastic body contacts the outer periphery of the pedestal at a time of supplying the coating material," as recited in claim 20. The Office Action agrees that

Fukuta fails to disclose the smoother of claim 20. However, the Office Action asserts that the flexible blade 5 of Gane remedies the deficiency of Fukuta. Applicants disagree.

For example, although not explicitly stated, it appears that the Office Action asserts that the upper pallet 1a of Fukuta corresponds to the cam of claim 20, and that the lower pallet 1b of Fukuta corresponds to the pedestal of claim 20. In addition it appears that the Office Action asserts that the doctor blade 30 of Fukuta substantially corresponds to the smoother of claim 20 with the only deficiency being that the doctor blade 30 of Fukuta lacks an elastic body.

However, Fukuta discloses that the upper inward longitudinal end portion of the doctor blade 30 follows the outer peripheral surface of the upper pallet 1a to maintain a constant distance between the doctor blade 30 and the outer peripheral surface of the columnar structural body of Fukuta (see Fukuta, Fig. 5a and col. 6, lines 32-40). However, Fukuta is silent regard the relationship between the lower inward longitudinal end portion of the doctor blade 30 and the outer peripheral surface of the lower pallet 1b. In fact, it seems unlikely that the lower inward longitudinal end portion of the doctor blade 30 overlaps or follows the outer peripheral surface of the lower pallet 1b because the alignment of the doctor blade 30 with the columnar structural body can be performed solely by aligning the doctor blade 30 with the upper pallet 1a.

In addition, Fukuta merely discloses that the doctor blade 30 of Fukuta follows the upper pallet 1a, which does not necessarily mean that the upper inward longitudinal end portion of the doctor blade 30 contacts the upper pallet 1a. Therefore, in addition to failing to disclose an elastic body, Fukuta fails to disclose that the inward longitudinal end portions of the doctor blade 30 contact the upper and lower pallets 1a and 1b. Gane fails to remedy the deficiencies of Fukuta.

First, Gane fails to disclose any elements that correspond to the cam and pedestal of claim 20. Therefore, Gane fails to disclose a flexible body that contacts the peripheral surfaces of a cam and a pedestal.

Second, the upper end of the flexible blade 5 of Gane is fixedly connected to the supporting member 6 and does not contact an outer periphery of the web of paper 1 (see Gane, Fig. 1, col. 3, lines 11-35 and col. 4, lines 27-40). Thus, Gane fails to disclose both upper and lower end portions of an elastic body that contact the outer peripheries of any element corresponding to the cam and pedestal of claim 20. Therefore, claim 20 is patentable over Fukuta and Gane.

Claims 21, 23-25, 27, 28 and 33-40 depend from independent claim 20. Therefore, those claims are patentable over the references at least for their dependence from claim 1, as well as for the additional features those claims recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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